

## Policy on Textbook and Course Material Adoption

[DRAFT 20260317]

<b>Policy Title</b>	<b>Policy on Textbook and Course Material Adoption</b>
<b>Policy #</b>	03.102.1
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs; Vice President for Student Affairs
<b>Contact Information</b>	Questions regarding this policy can be directed to the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Initiatives at (401) 874-5958 or the Vice President for Student Affairs at (401) 874-2427.
<b>Approved By</b>	President of the University of Rhode Island
<b>Effective Date</b>	
<b>Next Review Date</b>	No later than
<b>Who Needs to Know About this Policy</b>	All faculty, staff, and students of the University as well as University Affiliates.
<b>Definitions</b>  <i>Defined terms and shorthand references are capitalized throughout.</i>	<p><b>Course Materials.</b> Materials required or recommended for student purchase, as well as Open Educational Resources to support coursework, fixed or unfixed, in any format, including, but not limited to, digital, print, audio, visual, or any combination thereof. Examples include, but are not limited to, textbooks, e-books, online access codes, software licenses, lab manuals, workbooks, educational applications, and digital content platforms. <b>Exclusions:</b> Materials that are freely and legally available at no cost to students and do not have an associated ISBN, materials provided free by the University or instructor, or instructor-created handouts or resources such as lectures, lecture notes, syllabi, study guides, bibliographies, visual aids, images, diagrams, multimedia presentations, and web-ready content.</p> <p><b>Employee.</b> Any person employed by the University, including faculty, staff, and students regardless of the source of funds within the University.</p> <p><b>Open Educational Resources (“OER”).</b> Teaching, learning, and research materials that have an ISBN and reside in the public domain or are released under an open license permitting free use, reuse, revision, and redistribution.</p> <p><b>University Affiliate.</b> Any individual who is not a faculty member, staff, or student who otherwise has a formal relationship with the University, including but not limited to visiting scholars, visiting students, research fellows, professional program participants, club sports coaches, and volunteers as well as employees and associates of the URI Foundation, URI Research Foundation, and members of the University of Rhode Island Board of Trustees. Vendors and contractors are not</p>

	considered University Affiliates, except for those with an ongoing presence on the University campus as regular operations support staff.
<b>Statutes, Regulations, and Policies Governing or Necessitating This Policy</b>	Higher Education Opportunity Act, Pub. L. No. 110-315, § 112, 122 Stat. 3078, amending Higher Education Act of 1965, Title I, Part C: added § 133, 20 U.S.C. § 1015b.
<b>Reason for Policy / Purpose</b>	To ensure students have timely access to course material information, enabling them to make informed purchasing decisions, while maintaining compliance with legal and regulatory requirements and minimizing potential conflicts of interest inconsistent with the University's mission and vision.
<b>Forms Related to this Policy</b>	

## Policy Statement

All Employees of the University of Rhode Island ("University") are required to manage University affairs in alignment with its mission and vision, while adhering to applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and University policies and procedures. The University is committed to providing high-quality education that is accessible to all students, respecting the academic freedoms of faculty, and valuing educational partnerships and relationships that further advance University initiatives.

This policy sets expectations for the selection, disclosure, and sales of academic textbooks and other Course Materials. The policy applies only to textbooks and other Course Materials which, as defined, either a) have a monetary cost for purchase, or b) are OER. The Office of the Provost and academic deans are responsible for overseeing procedures to ensure compliance with policy requirements.

### I. Textbook and Course Material Selection

Faculty have the academic freedom to select textbooks and course materials that best meet the instructional goals of their courses. In alignment with the University's commitment to academic excellence, affordability, and equitable access, faculty are encouraged to consider quality, cost, availability, the need for coordination with other instructors or courses, and OER when selecting course materials. Faculty are also reminded to avoid conflicts of interest when requiring students to purchase materials from which they or a family member may benefit financially. Further information can be found in the *Policy on Conflict of Interest and Commitment*.

Faculty and academic units are required to make a good faith effort to source textbooks and other Course Materials through the Campus Store, and may only utilize alternate sources if either a) the Campus Store is unable to provide the Course Material, b) the Course Material will have a lower cost to students through an alternate source, or c) the Course Material available through the Campus Store doesn't offer the exact features as the one available through an outside vendor.

Faculty and academic units must obtain a waiver from the Campus Store before executing contracts with suppliers for sales of textbooks or other Course Materials (see procedures), and any such contracts must not:

- Conflict with current contracts between the University and its Campus Store,

- Prevent students from purchasing materials from alternative suppliers,
- Restrict instructors in selecting materials they deem fit for their courses, or
- Favor a single supplier, unless the material is solely available through that supplier.

**II. Sales and Disclosure**

Faculty are obligated to submit comprehensive, accurate, and timely information regarding textbooks and other Course Materials to the University. The University, in turn, is responsible for transmitting this information to its contracted Campus Store, ensuring that materials are available and information disclosed in compliance with the requirements established by the Higher Education Act. Faculty may share textbook and course material information with external suppliers; however, this must not substitute for the official submission to the University, which is essential for allowing students to utilize financial aid funds and ensuring regulatory compliance.

Faculty and academic units are prohibited from selling or receiving any form of compensation for textbooks, course materials, instructional content, or services, whether directly to students or through a personal business or family member. Additionally, faculty members and academic units must not accept financial incentives from publishers or third parties for adopting specific textbooks or course materials. When providing information to students about affordable textbook and course material options, it must be presented objectively.

**III. Enforcement**

Violations of this policy by Employees may subject the Employee to appropriate discipline in keeping with the provisions of any applicable collective bargaining agreements and other applicable employment policies.

**Exceptions**

None

**Policy Review and Revisions**

(Versions earlier than the first policy number may be paper only)

Policy #	Effective Date	Reason for Change	Changes to Policy
03.102.1	[REDACTED]	n/a	n/a